

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 091005

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 091005

EXDIS, TOSEC 194

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO, UK

SUBJECT:MESSAGE ON PORTUGAL FROM FOREIGN SECRETARY

CALLAGHAN

1. FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO YOU FROM FOREIGN SECRETARY
CALLAGHAN HAS JUST BEEN DELIVERED BY PETER RAMSBOTHAM:

QUOTE: I HAVE JUST HAD A VERY USEFUL MEETING WITH MARIO
SOARES, THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST
PARTY, ABOUT WHICH I THOUGHT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HEAR RIGHT
AWAY.

THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL IS STILL, OF COURSE, CONFUSED
AND SPINOLA'S INTENTIONS AS REGARDS THE FORMATION OF A
GOVERNMENT ARE NOT CLEAR. SOARES SAYS THA A GOVERNMENT
WILL BE FORMED WITHIN FOURTEEN DAYS AND HAS MADE IT CLEAR
TO ME THAT THE ONLY JOB WHICH THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST
PARTY WOULD ACCEPT IS THAT OF PRIME MINISTER: HE HIMSELF
WOULD CERTAINLY DECLINE THE POST OF FOREIGN MINISTER. THIS
IS BECAUSE HE SEES HIS MAIN TASK AS BEING PREPARATION FOR
THE ELECTIONS WHICH HE EXPECTS WITHIN A YEAR. IF HE WERE
APPOINTED PRIME MINISTER NOW, HE WOULD RESIGN FROM THE
SECRETARY GENERALSHIP, AND THINKS HE WOULD BE IN A GOOD
POSITION TO ORGANISE AND WIN THE ELECTIONS. AS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 091005

FOREIGN MINISTER HE WOULD BE OUT OF THE COUNTRY TOO OFTEN.

AT PRESENT HE THINKS THAT IF SPINOLA HIMSELF DOES NOT
BECOME PRIME MINISTER, HE WILL APPOINT AN INDEPENDENT OR A

CATHOLIC TO THE POSITION.

SOARES SEES THE SOCIALIST PARTY AS THE ONLY FORCE IN THE
COUNTRY CAPABLE OF RESISTING THE COMMUNISTS WHO, HE
BELIEVES, HAVE THE FULL BACKING OF THE SOVIET UNION.
SOARES POINTED OUT THAT DURING YESTERDAY'S MAY DAY DEMON-
STRATIONS IN LISBON, WHICH MAY HAVE INVOLVED AS MANY AS A
MILLION PEOPLE, HE HIMSELF WAS THE ONLY PERSONALITY IN A
POSITION TO CHALLENGE THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COM-
MUNIST PARTY, CUNHAL. HE SAYS THAT THE RIGHT WING ARE IN
NO STATE TO STAGE A COUNTER COUP OR EVEN TO CONSTITUTE A
VIABLE POLITICAL FORCE AT THE MOMENT.

SOARES ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HAVING THE FULL SUP-
PORT OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS. HE SEES
THIS AS BEING OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IF DECOLONISA-
TION IS TO BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT BLOODSHED. TO THIS END HE
IS VERY ANXIOUS TO MEET YOU AND TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES
AND THE UNITED NATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I TOLD HIM
THAT YOU WOULD BE AWAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST FOR THE NEXT
TEN DAYS OR SO AND THAT YOU MIGHT BE VERY HARD PRESSED
IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOUR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES. HE
SAID THAT THERE WAS NO POINT IN HIS VISITING THE UNITED
STATES IF HE COULD NOT MEET YOU THERE. HE WAS THEREFORE
VERY INTERESTED IN ANY SUGGESTION THAT WE SHOULD MEET
YOU HERE IN LONDON IF YOU STOP OFF HERE ON YOUR WAY BACK.
HE WOULD THEN PUT OFF HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES
UNTIL SOME TIME LATER.

I SAID THAT I WOULD PUT THIS IDEA TO YOU AND RELAY YOUR
ANSWER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. I EMPHASISED THAT IT
WOULD PROBABLY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIX A DEFINITE DAY UNTIL
NEARER THE TIME AND THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO AVOID
ADVANCE PUBLICITY: NEITHER POINT CAUSED HIM ANY
DIFFICULTY.

I HAVE KNOWN MARIO SOARES FOR MANY YEARS AND HAVE CONSID-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 091005

ERABLE CONFIDENCE IN HIM. WE SHALL BE OFFERING THE
PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY ORGANISATIONAL AND TECHNICAL
HELP IN THE BELIEF THAT A GOVERNMENT WITH THEIR PARTICIPA-
TION, IS THE ONE WHICH OFFERS THE BEST PROSPECTS FOR THE
WEST. ACCORDING TO SOARES, SPINOLA, WITH WHOM SOARES HAS
BEEN IN TOUCH FOR SOME TIME, TAKES THE SAME VIEW. I
SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN YOUR ASSESSMENT OF ALL THIS.
UNQUOTE.

2. PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF ABOVE MESSAGE AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND INFORMED US THAT SPD FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHIEF WISCHNEWSKI HAD TRANSMITTED REQUEST OF MARIO SOARES THAT

HE CALL ON HILLENBRAND MAY 3 DURING VISIT TO BONN. ACCORDING TO WISCHNEWSKI, SOARES, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE JUNTA IN LISBON, DESIRED TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH US OFFICIALS. WE HAVE TOLD HILLENBRAND THAT IN OUR VIEW PROPER PLACE FOR SUCH CONTACT IS IN LISBON, BUT THAT IF SOARES INSISTS ON SEEING HIM, HE MAY RECEIVE HIM AND HEAR HIM OUT. (PERTINENT TELEGRAMS BEING REPEATED TO YOU.)

3. WE UNDERSTAND SOARES WILL ALSO BE VISITING THE HAGUE TO SEE VAN DER STOEL.

4. AMBASSADOR SCOTT CALLED ON GENERAL SPINOLA MAY 2. INVITATION TO CALL CAME IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRY BY EMBASSY LISBON TO FOREIGN OFFICE SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE AS TO WHEN IT MIGHT BE CONVENIENT TO MAKE A REQUEST FOR AN APPOINTMENT.

5. AS SOON AS WE HAVE RECEIVED REPORTS FROM BONN AND LISBON ON ABOVE CONVERSATIONS, WE SHALL SEND YOU A RECOMMENDED REPLY TO CALLAGHAN. RUSH

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